

FEB 11 1993

*Pat Donovan*  
*mm 544*FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

10 FEB 1993

IN REPLY REFER TO:

*mm Docket 92-266*8310-MEA  
CN93200342

RECEIVED

MAR 22 1993

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARYHonorable J. Bennett Johnston  
United States Senate  
136 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Johnston:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of Linda Wheeler of Lake Charles, Louisiana. Your constituent objects to rate increases by her local cable television operator.

The Commission has a clear understanding that Congress adopted the Cable Act of 1992 to constrain unreasonable cable rates. The Commission is in the process of formulating rules implementing the rate provisions of the law and is seeking public comment on those provisions that address rate rollbacks, refunds, and evasions of statutory requirements. The Commission will attempt to implement these provisions faithfully, and will consider the conduct of the cable industry during the interim period in deciding what kind of regulation is needed.

Your constituent's letter will be placed in the record of this proceeding so that the Commission can be mindful of her concerns during its deliberations. I trust that the foregoing and the enclosures are informative.

Sincerely,

*Roy J. Stewart*Roy J. Stewart  
Chief, Mass Media Bureau

Enclosures

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J. BENNETT JOHNSTON  
LOUISIANA

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1802

January 27, 1993

MMB  
catv-rates  
342

Mrs. Linda Townsend Solheim, Director  
Federal Communications Commission  
Legislative Affairs  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 857  
Washington, D.C. 20554

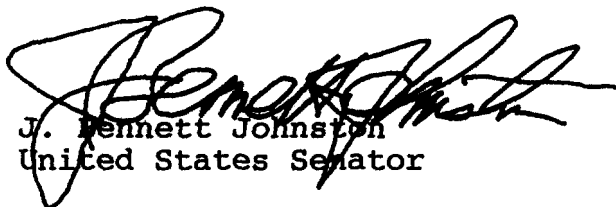
Dear Mrs. Solheim:

Because of my desire to be responsive to all inquiries, I respectfully request your consideration of the enclosed material.

I will appreciate your findings and views, in duplicate form, along with the return of the enclosures by February 26, 1993.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



J. Bennett Johnston  
United States Senator

JBj/gbb  
Enclosure

December 21, 1992

Honorable J. Bennett Johnston, Senator  
136 Hart  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

1992 DEC 28 AM 8:11

RE: Cable Rates

Dear Senator Johnston,

I have just received notification from Video Design (our local cable company) that their monthly rates will increase from \$23.95 to \$25.50, effective January 1. Since they had campaigned vigorously against the recent cable legislation and warned the legislation would cause rates to increase, I was not terribly surprised about their move. But I sincerely hope that something can be done soon to force this company, and others who are milking their customers' pocketbooks, to provide services at reasonable rates.

When I first subscribed to basic cable in 1980, the monthly rate was \$8.25. That rate included CNN, CNN Headline News, TBS, HSE, ESPN, USA and others. After the deregulation of cable, the cable company pulled a fast one--they split off ESPN, HSE, CNN, CNN Headline News, USA and a number of other channels that had been previously included in the basic rate, put them into a "Basic Plus" package, for about \$5.00 additional charge per month, and lowered the rate of the plain vanilla "Basic" (local area channels plus TBS and C-Span). Of course, in order to get the "Basic Plus" package, one must first subscribe to the "Basic" package. I have subscribed to the Basic Plus package since it was initiated, but because the content of the Basic and Basic Plus is essentially the same as the original Basic package, the combined rates for both must be used to demonstrate the rate increases over the last 12 years.

Following is a list of the rate increases from 1980 to date:

10/80 -	\$ 8.25	03/88 -	\$13.95
10/81 -	\$10.25	02/89 -	\$16.95
07/84 -	\$10.95	10/89 -	\$19.95
07/85 -	\$11.45	01/91 -	\$21.95
01/86 -	\$11.95	01/92 -	\$23.75
		01/93 -	\$25.50

This represents over a 300% increase in cable rates since 1980. During the first seven years represented above, cable rates increased by 45%; during the last 5 years, they have increased by 113%. I can think of no other service or product that has increased at this rate in the same time period. The service is no better than it ever was--there are frequent outages that last several hours at a time, the reception is seldom as good as we can receive local channels with an antenna, some channels are consistently poor, you can hardly call the cable office without getting a busy signal, and when you complain to them about their service, they are rude.

Please do anything you can to help cable consumers like me from continuing to be ripped off.

Sincerely,



Linda Wheeler  
Rt. 7, Box 928  
Lake Charles, LA 70611